

Boxing stars champion COVID-19 vaccine as the 'best jab' of 2021

- Some of the biggest names in boxing have come together to urge fans to get the COVID-19 vaccine, backing the biggest vaccination programme in our history
- In a new short film, Eddie Hearn, Ricky Hatton, Conor Benn, Terri Harper and Campbell Hatton reveal which current and former boxers have the best jab
- As everyone aged over 18 is invited for vaccines in England, stars encourage all eligible people to book their jab as soon as they can

Boxing legends Eddie Hearn, Ricky Hatton, Conor Benn, Terri Harper and Campbell Hatton have weighed in to encourage their fans to get COVID-19 vaccines, hailing them 'the best jab' of 2021.

In a new film released today, the boxing stars debate which fighter has the best jab, before awarding the title to the UK's COVID-19 vaccination programme, which has saved more than 14,000 lives and prevented 42,000 hospitalisations in England so far.

In the film, while Hatton praises Klitschko's jab and Hearn says the ultimate punch is unquestionably from Muhammad Ali, the stars all agree that the COVID-19 jab claims the knockout and they encourage the public to take-up the vaccine when offered.

This renewed support comes just weeks after the success of the vaccination programme paved the way for spectators to be welcomed back to sports events and following the Prime Minister's announcement that the government is on track to offer a first vaccine to all adults by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

The vaccine is key to defending us from whatever punch this virus throws at us, with each jab bringing us one step closer to defeating this virus.

We're hugely grateful to these boxing stars for getting the message out there that the vaccine is the best possible way to protect yourselves and your loved ones.

It's vital that everyone books and attends their appointment when the offer comes, and to crucially come back for that second dose.

Vaccines Minister, Nadhim Zahawi said:

I am thrilled that our boxing heroes are backing the vaccine. It is indeed the best jab, and it is the key to getting this country back in the ring so we can build back better from this virus.

We've recently extended the invite of a jab to everyone aged 18 and over. So let's roll up our sleeves, get the vaccine and put this pandemic behind us.

Eddie Hearn, Chairman of Matchroom Sport and boxing promoter, said:

I've seen a few jabs in my time, but the COVID-19 jab is important and will make a big difference. I can't wait to get back ringside as soon as possible!

Ricky Hatton MBE said:

I've been on the receiving end of a few too many of Mayweather's jabs – so I'm definitely up for getting one which isn't going to hurt! The NHS are doing a fantastic job – it's important we all do our part.

Terri Harper said:

In boxing, the jab keeps you safe. As part of the vaccine rollout, this jab is no different – we need to all roll our sleeves up and get the vaccine to make sure we can get back to a more normal way of life.

The 'best jab' film follows the new 'Every Vaccination Gives Us Hope' campaign launched last month to encourage those due to be offered the vaccine in the second phase of the rollout to join the millions of people who have already received their jabs.

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and are even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it.

New analysis by Public Health England (PHE) shows for the first time that 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.61.2) variant. The analysis suggests that after 2 doses, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation.

A total of 72.4 million doses have been administered across the UK, with 79.8% of the UK adult population having received a first dose and 57.8% of the people receiving both doses.

By 19 July, all those aged 50 and over and the clinically extremely vulnerable will have been offered their second dose.

The government met its target of offering a vaccine to the most vulnerable by 15 April and is on track to offer a first dose to all adults by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned. NHS England has extended the offer of a vaccine to everyone over the age of 18.

As part of step 3 of the roadmap, the government updated guidance to allow spectators to attend both indoor and outdoor sporting events at reduced capacity.